

Washington State READY*CORPS

EMPLOYMENT SECURITY DEPARTMENT



July 2008

THIS ISSUE FEATURES

<i>Ready*Corps Reflection</i>	1
<i>National Service Leads to Position</i>	2
<i>Partners in Emergency Preparedness Conference</i>	3
<i>Next Steps</i>	3
<i>Life After AmeriCorps</i>	4-5
<i>Program Host Sites</i>	6

3 DAYS 3 WAYS

ARE YOU READY ?

Have a plan
Make a kit
Get involved !

*To all the Volunteers,
VISTA members,
and Host Sites
that make our program
possible*

Thank You!

Ready*Corps Reflection

It's hard to believe that August is just around the corner and close to a full year has gone by since we started our 2007-2008 Ready*Corps program.

Through June 30, Ready*Corps members have recruited over 3,400 volunteers who have contributed 46,768 hours of service.

Members also received a wealth of training this year, including, but not limited to:

- Adult CPR
- First Aid
- Ham Radio
- FEMA on-line courses
- Damage Assessment
- Introduction to Mass Care in Disaster
- Shelter Operations and Simulation
- Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training

The Ready*Corps VISTA members left their footprint in communities throughout the state this year, as they assisted in organizing and facilitating training activities.

Carrie Akerstrom, serving with the City of Everett Emergency Management, coordinated a Skywarn weather spotter class with 80 participants learning how to spot and report storms.

Ashley Fernandez, serving with City of Kent Emergency Management, assisted over 248 CERT students with 100% of the participants agreeing that they are better

prepared for disasters.

Ray Ruddles, serving with American Red Cross, Benton-Franklin Chapter, presented Disaster Preparedness classes to more than 840 children.

Serving in a program like Ready*Corps leads to developing leadership qualities and abilities that should benefit members long after their term of service is completed. Serving as a VISTA has been referred to as a real life education and work experience wrapped into one. Because of their proven commitment to service and the level of skills developed during their term, members have increased their marketability for future endeavors.



Ready*Corps VISTA, Ray Ruddles, serving with Benton-Franklin chapter of the American Red Cross, with youth from the Boys and Girls Club.



Dale Grogan served two years with Ready*Corps.

"Most importantly, I was able to get hands on experience, which helped me qualify for my new position."



Dale Grogan instructs students during their CERT disaster final.

National Service Leads to Position

*The following personal testimony is from Dale Grogan, who, after serving two terms as a Ready*Corps VISTA, was recently hired as the Homeland Security Planner for Walla Walla, Office of Emergency Management. Dale credits his experience in Ready*Corps for enabling him to qualify for his new position. Congratulations Dale!*

I got started in the AmeriCorps VISTA program not long after high school and not really knowing what I wanted to do with my life. I had considered Law Enforcement, Paramedic, and other professions in the emergency preparedness field. After completing a course in Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training I began to think that this was something I wanted to do. I continued to work with the CERT Coordinator, helping out with exercises and activities and one day I was asked if I would be interested in being the CERT Coordinator. At first I was a little hesitant and didn't turn my application in until the day before the posting closed. To my surprise, I was offered the position. I began to see the kind of work that goes on and how quickly things can go from calm to chaos, but within a few months I felt that this was a profession I would like to turn into a career.

Near the end of my first term of service I started to feel that I was just beginning to understand things and decided to apply for a second term. After being accepted for a second term, I got excited...a chance to learn more!

It was toward the end of my second year that I was trying to decide if I wanted to commit to another year of service with AmeriCorps VISTA or to move on. With just a few weeks left, I had still not made a decision. And then I heard about a position opening in the department; Homeland Security Planner. I thought "planner", I have never planned much more than what I am going to be doing for a day. The more I thought about it, the more I realized that I had been involved in planning, and revisions of many plans, maybe I did know what I was doing? I made the decision to apply, I was interviewed, and I was accepted to the position. I guess my decision was made for me!

Looking back on my two years of service as an AmeriCorps VISTA, I now see the many benefits I received and how they helped me qualify for my new position. I had a great opportunity to get into a field I was interested in, without having a college degree. The host site where I was serving had a diverse group of partner organizations, such as Fire and Law Enforcement Chiefs and their staff, hospitals, and several groups in the private sector. This allowed me the opportunity to interact with many agencies and build a credible reputation with those I worked with and will be working with in the future. Most importantly, I was able to get hands on experience, which helped me qualify for my new position. I must also say that I was very fortunate to have such a good host site and supportive staff to help guide me along.



Members Attend Emergency Preparedness Conference

The Partners in Emergency Preparedness Conference was held April 1-2, at the Greater Tacoma Convention and Trade Center. This is the largest and most successful regional emergency preparedness conference in the Pacific Northwest. The conference annually hosts over 500 people representing business, schools, government, the non-profit sector, emergency management professionals and volunteer organizations.

Top-notch speakers and exhibitors provide cutting edge information on subjects such as business continuity planning, school safety, public health preparedness, homeland security, and public information.

Several Ready*Corps members were able to attend this event, some serving as volunteers. Michael Martin, serving with Seattle Emergency Management, attended a session on reaching out to immigrant and refugee communities. It reminded him of what a co-worker once told him, "if you take the time to build healthy relationships with those you serve, you will be amazed at what you can achieve".

Ashley Fernandez, serving with City of Kent Emergency Management commented, "the conference was not only informative to my present work in emergency management, but also to my future work in healthcare. Conferences like these are important in that they share successes, failures, and forward movement in emergency management".

"If you take the time to build healthy relationships with those you serve, you will be amazed at what you can achieve."

PARTNERS
IN EMERGENCY
PREPAREDNESS
CONFERENCE

For more information or details on next year's conference, contact Lisa Scott, Conference Chair at (425) 452-7923.

Next Steps - Looking to the Future

Members have many avenues to choose from when they complete their term of service—pursuing higher education or career opportunities, or possibly re-enrolling for another term of service. Members report from the field:

- Alexander Domesle, serving with King County EMD, plans to return to the University of Washington this fall to start a masters degree program in environmental health.
- Lynda Waterhouse Hall and Ray Ruddles, both serving with chapters of the American Red Cross, would like to serve another term, possibly at different sites.
- Sandra Mead, serving with the American Red Cross in Bremerton, signed on for her third term, her second with the Red Cross.
- Ashley Fernandez, serving with the City of Kent EMD, plans to attend St. George's University for their global medical program. She would like to complete her first year of medical school in England, the second in Grenada, followed by two years in New York. She has every intention of returning to the Puget Sound area to practice.
- Elaine Parker, serving with the City of Everett EMD, accepted a position with FEMA.





There are currently 78 colleges and universities that match the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award for their students.

*For a full listing, by state, go to:
[http://
www.americorps.org](http://www.americorps.org)*

Scroll to the bottom of the page—under the heading “Individuals”, then click on “Alumni”.



Life After AmeriCorps* VISTA

by Terri Jack, Program Manager

It seems impossible that there are only a couple of months left in the term of service. What a year this has been! For those of you finishing your term of service at the end of August, I'm sure you've been giving a lot of thought recently as to what comes

Or perhaps you're contemplating a second (or possibly third) term of service.

Whatever direction your path takes you, these two pages will provide valuable information on using your education award and resources for exploring career opportunities.

Using the Education Award

Upon successful completion of your term of service, you had the option of choosing an education award or an end-of-term cash stipend. For those of you choosing the end of term cash stipend, you will receive \$1,200 in your final stipend check, on the 10th of September. For those of you choosing the \$4,725 education award, once your exit paperwork is processed, your education award will be available to you through the “MyAmeriCorps” portal. You can set up your account by going to:

<https://my.americorps.gov/mp/recruit/registration.do>

By registering to use the system, you can check your award balance, access important financial forms and, most importantly, quickly and easily make payments to your educational or financial institution. The system also provides you with the ability to:

- Modify contact information (name, addresses, e-mail address)
- View and print tax statements and forms
- View and print pay statements (as applicable)
- Access customized letters certifying your term of service with an AmeriCorps program

There are also on-line resources for finding out more about the education award, the best way to use it, taxes, and alternative uses of the education award. You can take an on-line tutorial at:

<http://encorps.nationalserviceresources.org/edaward/index.shtml>

The tutorial includes:

- **Education award basics:** The nuts and bolts of what all present and future Education Award holders need to know, including the history of the award.
- **Going to college:** What national service participants need to know about student financial aid.

Life After AmeriCorps* VISTA

- **A cautionary tale**: How Marvin spent more for college than he should have (after serving two full years)! This fictional scenario shows what happens when everything goes wrong.
- **Alternative uses of the education award**: Lukewarm on the idea of enrolling in a college or university degree program? Here are some other options.
- **Repaying student loans**: The way you repay your student loans can affect your bottom line. Learn strategies for getting the most out of your education award when paying down your loan balance.
- **Taxes**: The education award is taxed, but there are considerations that can brighten your outlook.
- **Online resources**: Learn more at these locations.

For additional resources, check out these websites:

WA State Employment Security Dept.

<http://fortress.wa.gov/esd/portal/employment>

Comprehensive labor market information, as well as available state programs and workshops.

America's Career Network

<http://www.acrnetwork.org/>

This site features a six-step decision cycle that helps members look at careers and educational needs.

National Career Development Association

<http://www.ncda.org>
NCDA's site offers links to online career planning tools, occupational information, career trends, and salary data.

Worklife

<http://www.worklife.com>
This site allows the user to construct an individualized (free) account and portfolio with industry-specific career information.

Other useful sites:

www.monster.com

(online career center)

www.idealists.org

(starting a career in the nonprofit sector)

www.cns.gov/jobs (field opportunities in human rights)

www.doleta.gov (a U.S. Department of Labor site with sections on planning and starting a new career)

Exploring Career Opportunities



There are also on-line resources that will help you with the transition from National Service to the world of work. Check out this link:

<http://encorps.nationalserviceresources.org/whatsnext/index.shtml>

This tutorial will help you to think and plan ahead so you can make decisions in a calm and reasoned way. Think of this tutorial as a tool you can use to:

- Plan your transition
- Reflect on the personal and professional growth you've experienced as a result of your AmeriCorps or VISTA service
- Assess your skills and accomplishments
- Weigh your choices for what comes next
- Identify resources and strategies to help you take the next steps

Remember, whatever decisions you face:

- Gather as much information as you can before making up your mind
- Consider the pros and cons of each option
- Get feedback from others whose opinions you respect



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Important Dates

August 25-28, 2008
VISTA

Pre-Service Orientation
Central Washington University

August 30, 2008
Last day of service for
September 2007 Enrollees

October 25, 2008
Make a Difference Day

October 28-30, 2008
SERVES Institute
Wenatchee Convention Center

REMEMBER:

Volunteer Reports due every
4th Wednesday of the month!

Ready*Corps is a statewide VISTA program administered by the Washington Service Corps (WSC) based in Olympia, WA. The program focuses on homeland security issues relating to disaster preparedness, emergency planning and community outreach activities.

Ready*Corps VISTA members serve with a variety of agencies and organizations (called host sites) including emergency management agencies, fire and sheriff's departments, local Red Cross Chapters and other community-based organizations.

American Red Cross

- King and Kitsap County
- Mount Rainier Chapter
- Benton Franklin Chapter

City of Kent Emergency Management

King County Office of Emergency Management

Public Health Seattle and King County

City of Auburn Police Department
Emergency Management

Seattle Emergency Management

Walla Walla Emergency Management

2-1-1 Behavioral Health Resources

City of Everett Fire Department
Office of Emergency Management

State of Washington
Emergency Management

Eastern Washington Center for the
Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Please join Washington Service Corps in welcoming our new host sites for 2008-2009

American Red Cross

- Apple Valley Chapter
- Benton Franklin Chapter
- King & Kitsap County Chapter
- Mt. Rainier Chapter

Benton County Emergency Management

City of Auburn Emergency Management

City of Everett Emergency Management

City of Kent Emergency Management

City of Renton Fire and Emergency Services

City of Shoreline Emergency Management

ElderHealth NW

King County Housing Authority

King County Office of Emergency Management

Public Health, Seattle-King County

Seattle Office of Emergency Management

Walla Walla County Emergency Management

Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)

- Clark County Public Health
- Community Minded Enterprises
- Grays Harbor Public Health and Social Services
- Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Region-8
- Public Health, Seattle-King County
- Skagit County Public Health Department
- Snohomish County MRC
- Snoqualmie Indian Tribe
- Tacoma Pierce County MRC
- Tulalip Tribes of Washington
- Thurston County Region-3 MRC
- Whatcom County MRC